achievement, built up on human experiments and human theories, in which a Jewish strand can no more be set apart than any other.

England, for some reason, has not produced the same long sequence of distinguished Jewish students in this field as Germany. There are, however, a handful of the highest eminence. Thus the greatest English pure mathematician of the nineteenth century (with the possible exception only of his collaborator, Cayley) was James Joseph Sylvester, Savilian Professor of Geometry in the University of Oxford, and the first professing Jew to enter the University of Cambridge. He was placed as second wrangler in 1837: but, owing to the religious intolerance which still prevailed, it was only in 1872 that he was able to take his degree! With Cayley, he shared the work of founding the doctrine of invariants in algebra, and he enriched the science of number with a body of doctrine on partitions. In addition (a surprising diversion for a mathematician) he was the author of a considerable body of verse of high quality, as well as translations from foreign languages and a theory of versification. The Sylvester Medal established by the Royal Society commemorates his outstanding services to learning. It was an English Jew, too, Benjamin Gompertz, who laid down the principles as to the decline of resistance to death which are the

foundation of all actuarial tables in use. "Had the principle [i.e. Gompertz' Law] been propounded in the days of Newton," affirmed the late Professor de Morgan, "Vitality would have been made a thing of, like attraction.[5'1]

**[1] Obituary notice in *The Athenceum,* July 22nd, 1865 [The meaning is clear, though the phrasing is awkward].